

Abstracts

“The trouble with John [and Giovanni] is...”: Race, Ethnicity and Mining Legislation in Western Australia before 1973

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Until 1973 persons deemed ‘Asiatic’ and ‘African’ were specifically excluded from working on or about mines in Western Australia. While it was not so readily possible for similar enactments to be made regarding certain ‘foreigners’ of European background, nonetheless, attempts were also made to limit the presence of such persons in the mining industry. This paper examines the historical development of such restrictions and explores some of the bases for such legislation. It suggests that the end of restrictions, particularly those in relation to ‘Asiatics’, had more to do with the exigencies of economic development than with any developing sense of racial tolerance in Western Australia.